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ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY ASPECTS OF THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS

Note verbale dated 12 August 1993 from the Permanent Mission of Belarus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Belarus to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to transmit this note verbale dated 12 August 1993 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus, which sets forth the position of the Government of the Republic of Belarus regarding the need to move Belarus as soon as possible from group (b) to group (c) for the apportionment of the costs of United Nations peace-keeping operations (see annex).

In fact, when the decision to allocate the Republic of Belarus to group (b) was adopted, Belarus was still part of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. At present, the legal status of the Republic of Belarus under international law has changed significantly. Yet, it is one of two former Soviet republics to remain in group (b) for the apportionment of the costs of United Nations peace-keeping operations, while all other former Republics of the USSR that were admitted recently to membership in the United Nations were quite justifiably allocated to group (c).

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Belarus to the United Nations would be grateful if you would have this note and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 140 of the provisional agenda.

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* A/48/150.

Annex

Note verbale dated 12 August 1993 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus addressed to the Secretary-General

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and referring to his report on "Composition of the existing groups of Member States for the apportionment of the costs of peace-keeping operations financed through assessed contributions" (A/47/484), submitted under agenda item 124 of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly entitled, "Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peace-keeping operations", is asking that a number of extremely important facts be brought to the attention of the States Members of the United Nations regarding the continued assignment of the Republic of Belarus to group (b) in the composition of the groups of Member States for the apportionment of the costs of peace-keeping operations financed through assessed contributions.

As is well known, in 1973 the Republic of Belarus, then one of the 15 Republics of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and a Member of the United Nations, was assigned to the above-mentioned group, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 3101 (XXVIII) of 11 December 1973. At that time, this step was taken for political and ideological reasons. This placement of Belarus has remained unchanged to date, in spite of repeated attempts to resolve the problem of obvious discrepancies in the assignment of countries to groups. The most recent attempt was made during the consideration of the above-mentioned report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

In the case of the Republic of Belarus, this problem has recently taken on a particularly acute, and it would not be exaggerated to say, offensive character, primarily owing to the fact that the original motives for assigning the Republic of Belarus to group (b) have historically become obsolete, its legal status under international law has changed and its economic situation has greatly deteriorated.

In December 1991, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics split up into 15 new, completely sovereign States, including Belarus, which began their existence as independent States under increasing economic hardship.

Unfortunately, since that time, the hardships have increased rather than decreased. This became evident particularly in the rupture of economic relations, traditionally established in the former USSR, which led to a sharp decrease in the production levels of all major economic sectors, and in turn to a decline in the standard of living. In Belarus, this was reflected in a decline in the national income of 11 per cent in 1992, and of 14 per cent during the first half of 1993. The volume of export earnings in freely convertible currency fell by 42 per cent in 1992, and this downward trend persisted during the first half of 1993. Today, the young Belarusian State must almost single-handedly bear the enormous burden of expenditure to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, the largest of its kind in the history of mankind. The cost of destroying weapons under the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe increases daily, as does the cost of dismantling and

removing nuclear weapons from Belarus in compliance with the START-1 Treaty and the Lisbon Protocol. Adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear-weapon State party has also imposed on the Government of Belarus substantial new expenses. These factors combined have led to a serious and constant decline in the solvency of the Republic of Belarus, and there is no basis to assume that the current situation will improve in the near future. Moreover, it has been aggravated by the unjustified decision adopted at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly to increase by more than one and a half the contribution of the Republic of Belarus to the regular budget of the United Nations in 1993 and 1994. This was accompanied by an increase in its contribution to the regular budget of the United Nations specialized agencies and to the financing of peace-keeping operations.

It is well known that the cost of peace-keeping operations has grown rapidly in recent years, and this trend is apparently becoming irreversible.

The Government of the Republic of Belarus has always striven to honour scrupulously its financial obligations under the United Nations Charter. However, the recent developments referred to above have made that impossible. There is a danger that the Republic of Belarus might become chronically in arrears with regard to its financial obligations towards the United Nations, unless the discrepancy is removed between our State's real capacity to pay and the unjustifiably increased obligations. One of the reasons for such obligations is the anachronism and economic absurdity of assigning the Republic of Belarus to group (b) for the apportionment of the costs of peace-keeping operations, i.e., to the group that includes, apart from Belarus and Ukraine, only the most economically developed Members of the United Nations. At the same time, group (c) now includes United Nations Members from Europe and even Union Republics of the former USSR that have a much higher per capita income than Belarus. In the opinion of the Government of the Republic of Belarus, this situation is intolerable and calls for urgent resolution in relation to Belarus during the forthcoming forty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

It is impossible for us to wait until such time as there is a comprehensive solution to the problem of removing the discrepancies in the assignment of States to the respective groups, for the prospects for such a solution appear extremely uncertain in the near future on matters of substance. In the case of the Republic of Belarus, there is every justification for taking a decision to move it from group (b) to group (c), even as an exceptional procedure.

In this connection, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus hopes that the United Nations, through its supreme organ, the General Assembly, will urgently consider this question and decide, not later than 31 December 1993, to move the Republic of Belarus to group (c).